

# *CADETS AND OFFICERS*



*SOME WEST POINT TALES*

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*April 2013*

## 1. Alexander Ross Piper

Alexander Ross Piper was born March 1st, 1865, at Ft. Wadsworth, on Staten Island in New York Harbor. Today, Staten Island is the borough of Richmond, one of the five that make up the city of New York. He was the son of James Wilson Piper and Sarah Van Dyke Ross the daughter of Edward Coke Ross who was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy in 1821. It was a little over a month later, that Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, Palm Sunday, April 12th 1865, ending the Civil War.



*Ft. Wadsworth, New York*

James Piper, who attained the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army, 5th Artillery, did not attend West Point. He was born in Carlisle, Pa. in 1832. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he joined the Union Army as a private in the District of Columbia Volunteers. In 1861, he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant in the 5th Artillery, and in 1866 promoted to Captain. Wounded at the Battle of Mechanicsville, Va. he was awarded a brevet for gallant and meritorious service. He received additional wounds at the Battle of Richmond, which eventually caused his death,

October 30th, 1876.

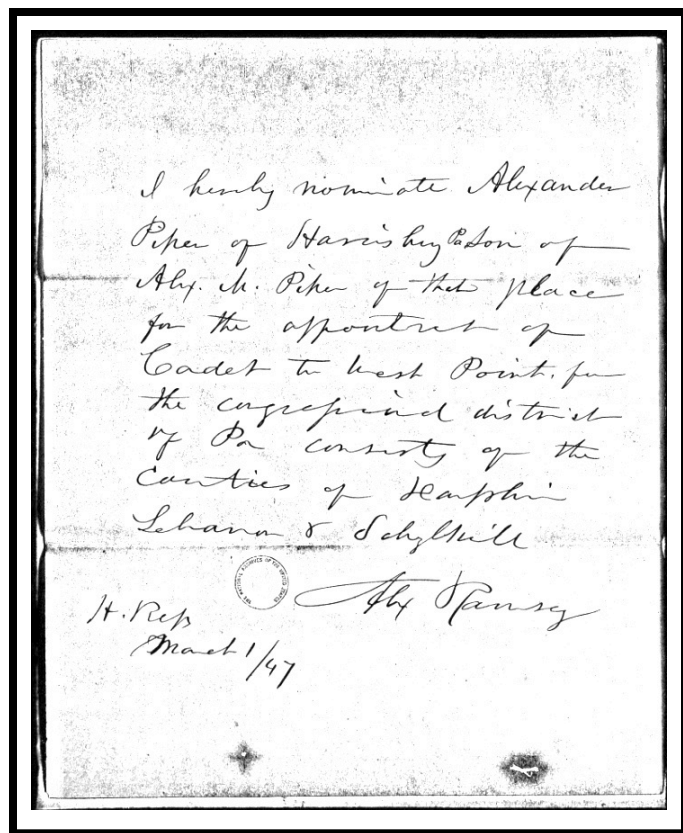
He is buried in the Ashland Cemetery, Carlisle, Pa., along with his father and mother, Alexander M. Piper, 1786 - 1868; Ann Espy Elder Piper, 1794 - 1886; and a brother, William Kirkpatrick Piper, 1825 - 1908.

At the death of his father when he was barely 11 years old, Alexander Ross' uncle Alexander, James' older brother, became his mentor and guardian. Alexander was an officer on active duty with the army. When he was unable to care for his nephew, young Alexander Ross aged 15, went to live with another uncle, William Kirkpatrick Piper, in Carlisle, where he attended the public schools.

To avoid confusion, I shall use the name Alexander when referring to the uncle, his nephew, and the subject of this chapter shall be called Alexander Ross, or simply ARP. To add to the confusion, Alexander's father was Alexander M. who will be mentioned only briefly.



*James Wilson Piper  
1832 - 1876*

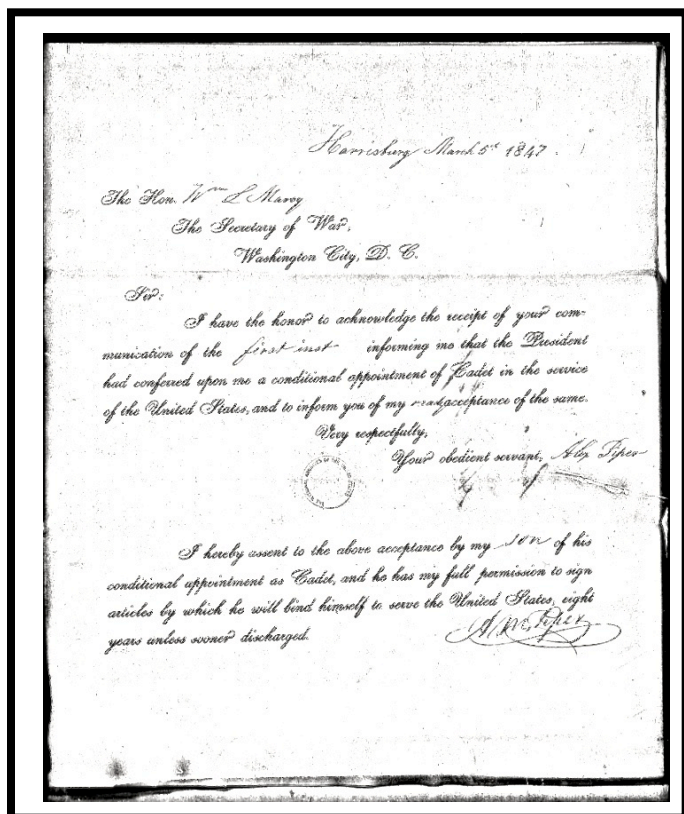


It has been noted that Alexander was born in Harrisburg, Pa. in 1828. More likely it was Carlisle, a town close to Harrisburg.

On March 1, 1847, he was nominated for West Point by Alexander Ramsey, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives 1843-1847, from Pennsylvania, for the counties of Dauphin, Lebanon and Schuylkill. His letter to the Secretary of War reads:

**"I hereby nominate Alexander Piper of Harrisburg, Pa. Son of Alex. M. Piper of that place for the appointment of Cadet to West Point for the congressional district of the counties of Dauphin, Lebanon & Schuylkill. signed: Alex Ramsey, H. Rep, March 1/47.**

Ramsey was later elected Governor of the Territory of Minnesota, Mayor of the city of St. Paul, and again was elected Governor when Minnesota became a sovereign state admitted to the Union. He is credited with being the first Governor to commit state militia to the Union cause in the Civil War as he was in Washington, D.C. at the time the conflict began. His relationship to the Piper family may have been instrumental in James Wilson Piper's enlistment.



In a reply to the Secretary of War, dated Harrisburg, March 5th 1847, the following was written:

**Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the first inst. informing me that the President had conferred upon me a conditional appointment of Cadet in the service of the United States, and to inform you of my ready acceptance of the same. Very respectfully, signed: Alex Piper**

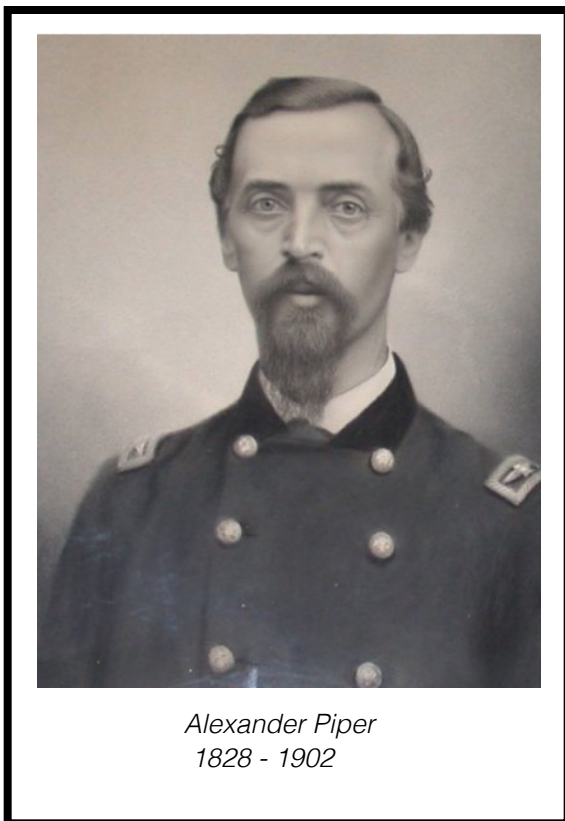
**I hereby assent to the above acceptance by my son of his conditional appointment as Cadet, and he has my full permission to sign articles by which he will bind himself to serve the United States, eight years unless sooner discharged. signed: A.M. Piper**

This appears to be a form letter with blanks for the proper words to be inserted and signed by the appointee and his parent or guardian. The Secretary of War at the time was William L. Marcy. James K. Polk, was President.



Alexander Piper was admitted to West Point, class of 1851, on July 1, 1847 at the age of 19. At the end of his first year, he was 4th in a class of 66 in the order of general merit as determined by the annual examination, and had dropped only one place to 5th by the time of his graduation. The class had been reduced to 42 by then, due to what was termed Casualties; Resigned, Discharged or Dismissed.

At his graduation, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Third Artillery, and this was to be his area of military expertise. He was at one time appointed captain of an infantry company, but he declined, and was appointed captain of the Third Artillery, the unit in which he served until he became a colonel of the Tenth New York Artillery in 1863. He served with merit during the Civil War, and continued his service, at one time being commander of the Presidio in San Francisco, and Ft. Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y.. In addition, he spent several tours of duty on the faculty at West Point as an instructor of artillery tactics.



Time for a slight digression. At the time that Alexander entered West Point in 1847, William Brown Cozzens had just completed the building of his new hotel on property just to the south of the Academy. His family consisted of his wife Jane Davidson, and seven children, the youngest, born in 1834, was a daughter named Adelaide.

I think it is safe to assume, that cadet Piper had, on several occasions, been present at the Cozzens Hotel at the same time as Miss Adelaide Cozzens, and that perhaps they had been formally introduced. When he graduated in 1851, she would have been 17. However, I can not confirm that there had been any romantic connection at that time, and Lt. Piper went off to active duty.

In 1865, Alexander returned to West Point to serve as Principal Assistant Instructor of Artillery Tactics, and Adelaide Cozzens, still unmarried, was probably assisting her father in the management of the hotel. I wish I had a more romantic story to tell,

but whatever the circumstances, Alexander and Adelaide were married in 1870, in Highland Falls, the town in which the Academy was located.

In 1872, he took a leave of absence from the military, and was recorded as being in Europe, probably this was a belated honeymoon. He returned to active duty the next year and continued to serve until retirement in 1891. He died tragically in 1902, in a fire in the Park Avenue Hotel in New York City, where he and Adelaide had established a residence. She survived and lived until 1922. Alexander Ross now had a foster mother as well as father; now, when his uncle was on active duty he may have resided with Adelaide Piper at the Cozzens Hotel.

Time for another digression. William Brown Cozzens and Jane Davidson had six other



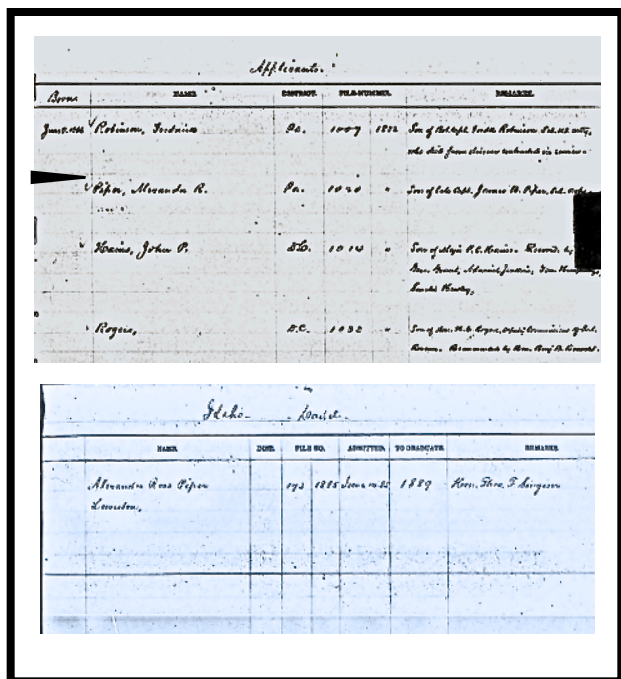
children in addition to Adelaide, one of whom was Sylvanus Thayer Cozzens, named for the officer who was the Commandant of West Point at the time Cozzens first took over management of the facility that was to become the West Point Hotel. In 1857, Sylvanus had married Susan Allen Wilson, and they had five children, the youngest being the only girl, Marie Susan, born in 1867. Sylvanus was very active in assisting his father in the management of the Cozzens Hotel.

When Sylvanus' wife Susan died in 1872, he must have felt that he needed a woman to help bring up his daughter, and his sister Adelaide, married at the time to Alexander, acted as a surrogate parent. Thus, in 1876, when Alexander Ross joined the household at the age of 11, he had a young cousin by marriage, Marie Susan Cozzens, age 9, who must have joined him in roaming the halls and grounds of the big hotel, and they became playmates and friends.



The above photo, which I believe was taken in 1878 or thereabouts, probably on the steps of the Cozzens Hotel, shows Alexander with his wife Adelaide in black to his right, young ARP with his boater on his knee, and Marie Susan looking contemplative as the middle young lady on the railing. I believe the young woman to Alexander's left was Helen Ansley Beatty, a daughter of Margaret Elder Piper and Erkuries Beatty, a niece of Alexander. The other two young ladies have so far escaped identity but I assume they were of the Cozzens family. Some detective work, using dates of birth might enable someone to give them names.

Alexander Ross Piper was nominated for West Point in 1885 from Idaho which was not admitted to the Union until 1890 when it became the 43rd state. It has always been something of a mystery as to how his name was connected to Idaho.



I have recently come across some documents that solve the mystery. The first is a record of his application noting that he was a son of the late Capt. James W. Piper with a military unit attachment which I could not decipher. The second seems to be a page which shows a U.S. state or territory affiliation, date of admission and when to graduate (1889) and the remark which has the name Hon. Theo F. Singiser.

Theodore Frelinghuysen Singiser (1845-1907), was born in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania . He originally enlisted in the Union Army as a private in the 6th Pennsylvania Reserves in 1863, but was discharged for medical reasons. He later became an officer with the 20th Cavalry, of the 181st Pa. Volunteers.

After the war he studied law and was admitted to the bar in Washington, D.C. while he was also employed in the U.S.Treasury. He was appointed receiver of moneys (income tax and other government fees) for the territory of Idaho, and became State Secretary of the Treasury and Acting Governor of the territory. He was elected delegate to and served as the Representative of the Territory of Idaho in the 48th U.S. Congress, 1883-1885 and it was at this time that he put forward ARP's name to then Sect'y of War Wm. C. Endicott, and Pres. Grover Cleveland.

He must have personally known the Pipers of Cumberland County, and perhaps had served in one of James' companies during the war. In any event, he was the nominator of Alexander Ross to West Point at the time he was representing Idaho in the government. And this I hope clears up that mystery.

Alexander Ross Piper was admitted to the United States Military Academy at West Point on June 14, 1885, at the age of 20 years and 3 months. He was one of a class of 78. By the time he graduated in 1889, the class numbered 49, almost 60% were Casualties. At the end of his first year, in the annual review by the Board of Visitors, examiners appointed each year by congress and the president, he was ranked 23 in a class by then already reduced to 75. He received a high rating in Discipline, median in Math and English, but not very good in French. During his four years he continued to rank high in Discipline, Drawing, and Tactics; median in Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Civil and Military Engineering and Ordinance and Gunnery. He was not destined to become a linguist as his rankings in French and later Spanish were not very high, and Chemistry, Chemical Physics, Mineralogy, Geology, Law and History were obviously not favorite subjects.





When he graduated in 1889 he was ranked 29 in his class of 49, appointed a 2nd lieutenant in the 8th U. S. Infantry Regiment and assigned to frontier duty, which meant going west to participate in the so called Indian Wars. But one more non military engagement was settled when he married Marie Susan Cozzens, June 2nd 1890, in Highland Falls, N. Y. before reporting for active duty.

His military career can be summed up as follows: 1890-91 frontier duty, Sioux Indian War; transferred to 2nd U.S. Infantry Regiment. 1892 -1896 professor of military science at Camp Gordon, Ga.; 1896 appointed 1st Lt. 15th U.S. Infantry Regiment; 1898 captain, commissary-subsistence, volunteers, Puerto Rico expedition; 1899 he retired for disability; 1899 discharged from volunteers; 1917-1919 returned to active duty during World War I at port of embarkation; 1919, retired as colonel.

Unfortunately, A R P 's military career was shortened when he suffered a hunting accident causing the loss of one arm. However, he distinguished himself as a civilian as well, by serving at one time as a Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Police Force, and later as the President of the South Brooklyn Railway, which eventually was absorbed into the N.Y. Subway system as part of the BMT line.

While doing research for this paper I came across a story about an incident which I don't believe the family is aware of. It concerns the chevrons awarded to cadets as a reward for class standing and a record of exemplary discipline.

After the graduation parade in June of 1886, Cadet Alexander Piper was awarded corporal chevrons to wear on his lower sleeves. These are described in the manual as two bars of single lace on each arm below the elbow, points up. They were highly sought after as they gave status and some leadership responsibilities to the cadet who could now be addressed by his superiors as Corporal Piper. As difficult as they were to earn, they were easy to lose for the slightest act of misconduct.

Cadets were allowed, in order to deliver messages or other authorized duties, to enter upon the porch of an officer's residence, but remaining there at length unless requested to do so was not permitted. Cadet Piper was noted to have been walking with a Miss Underhill, a friend from New York, who was staying at the residence of a Lieutenant Goethals.



*Lt. and Mrs. Alexander Piper*



*Capt. Alexander Ross Piper*



*Col. Alexander Ross Piper, U S A Ret.*



Piper had taken her to the door of the residence, and the officer's wife had come to the door and requested that the cadet deliver some invitations for tea, to his barracks. While she went back inside to retrieve them, Piper and Miss Underhill remained on the porch talking, just as an officer walked by. The officer, Lt. Price, reported the cadet for loitering on an officer's porch, and as punishment, Corporal Piper lost his chevrons. Perhaps the only breach of discipline he committed during his four years at the Academy. The official register of cadets shows that Piper had only 17 demerits in the 2 years ending May 31, 1889. The highest in the class had 312.....several in the 200's and even the 3rd ranked graduate had 80.

Alexander Ross Piper died November 21, 1952. His wife, Marie Susan Cozzens Piper preceded him in death, having passed away June 12, 1944. They are buried side by side in the cemetery at West Point.



## 2. CHARLES YOUNG

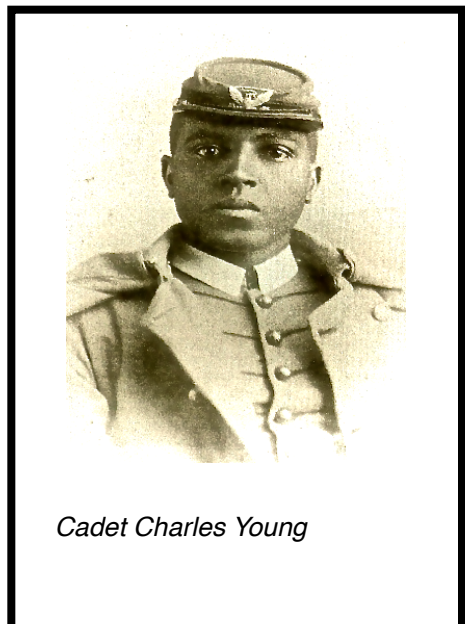


*The Class of 1889 West Point*

The above photo is of the West Point Class of 1889 taken in the fall of 1888. Cadet Alexander Ross Piper is in the next to last row directly under the scripted '89. A careful examination shows the initials ARP inked in on his chest. The inscription in the lower left reads: Absent - Campbell (*Archibald*), D'Armit (*Albert M.*), Haan (*William G.*), Skerrett (*Delamere*), Stockham (*Edward V.*), Winslow (*Eben E.*), and Young (*Charles*). *note: I have supplied first names.*

The Cadet I am interested in is Charles Young, the third African American to graduate from the Academy. He was actually admitted in June of 1884, but was left back a class to make up for deficiency in a subject. His sponsor was Hon. Alphonso Hart, the Congressional representative from the 12th district of Ohio.

Young was born in a small town in Kentucky in 1864, a year and one month before Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox ending the Civil War. His parents were slaves on a small farm, but somehow, his father Gabriel, was able to flee with his wife and child to neighboring Ohio, where he enlisted in the Fifth Regiment of the Colored Artillery Volunteers. This service earned him and his family freedom, and enough money to buy property of his own.



*Cadet Charles Young*

Charles' mother, Arminta, had learned to read and

write, not common among slaves, but probably an indication that she was a house slave, and not a farm hand. It was his mother that first gave young Charles his education, before he entered the all white schools of his home town where he excelled, graduating first in his high school class.

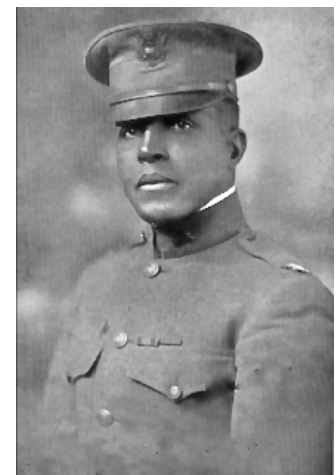
He could have gone to college, there were several all black colleges at this time, however he opted to stay in Ripley, Ohio and teach in the new black high school that had been established to accommodate the growing number of young negroes seeking a broader education. In 1883, perhaps on a dare, he took the competitive exam for acceptance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and achieved the second highest score. By chance, the first place student chose not to pursue a military career and dropped out of the running. Charles Young accepted and was admitted to the class of 1888. It would be almost 50 years before another African American would be admitted to the Academy.....Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. entered in 1932 and eventually became the first to attain the rank of General.

There was another black cadet at the time Young enrolled, John H. Alexander was in the class to graduate in 1887. He and Young were only the eighth and ninth to gain admission. Alexander was an excellent student, and was treated fairly by his classmates. Perhaps one of the reasons being that he was also an excellent boxer. But cadet Young was not as fortunate, and suffered discrimination and lack of respect from most of his classmates. He did, however, develop a coterie of friends who often went out of their way to befriend him and treat him as an equal.

In a letter he wrote some years later he cited the names of those members of the class that had shown him "goodwill and kindness".....cadet Alexander Piper was one of the ten. His letter ends with the following: *" I can never forget them; and have tried to pass along to others the kindness of you all, both in America, the Philippines, the West Indies and Africa. So you see you can not always tell the wide reaching influence of a word of cheer to even a black man. God knows how many white ones I have helped because you all helped me. Simply trying to pay the interest on a debt of gratitude, I owe you, that's all."*

Young's military career was notable. He served with the Buffalo Soldiers\* of the 9th and 10th Cavalries, and the 25th Infantry. He also taught Military Science at Wilberforce University in his home state of Ohio. At the time World War I began he had reached the rank of Lt.Colonel and hoped to be assigned an active role. However there were forces in the military hierarchy that were not willing to accept an African American in a position of command. In a questionable medical exam, doctors diagnosed that his blood pressure was too high, and in 1917 he was retired under protest.

In order to prove he was still fit for active duty, in June 1918 he rode 500 miles in 16 days, on horseback from Ohio to the capitol in Washington, D.C., and petitioned the Secretary of War for reinstatement and command of a combat unit to be stationed in the war zone in Europe. He succeeded, up to a point. Promoted full Colonel, but assigned to stateside duty in Ohio and still on the retired list.



*Col. Charles Young*

*\*Buffalo Soldiers originally were members of the U.S. 10th Cavalry Regiment of the U.S. Army formed in Sept. 1866 at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. This nickname was given to the "Negro Cavalry" by the Native American tribes they fought; the term eventually became synonymous with all of the African-American regiments formed in 1866.*

*Wikipedia*



He was finally called to active duty with the Ohio National Guard, five days before the war ended. A year later, in 1919 he was reassigned by Special Request of the State Department, as Military Attaché to the embassy in Monrovia, the capitol of Liberia, a position he had held once before in 1912, and he continued to serve as special advisor to several of the Governments of West African states and on special investigative operations for the State Department.

The devious actions that were used to deny Young an active command post during World War I were extraordinary, even for this time in history. It began with the rumors that Young would be brought out of retirement, commissioned a Colonel, and given command of the 10th Cavalry, his old unit. It must be remembered that the 10th Cavalry was one of the Buffalo Soldiers units, staffed by African American enlisted men with mostly white officers.

A white 1st lieutenant of the company let it be known that it would be difficult for him to respond to orders from a black superior. A senator from Missouri who became aware of this situation, notified President Woodrow Wilson, and asked for his assistance to rectify the problem. Wilson was sympathetic to the lieutenant's position, and asked his Secretary of War, Newton Baker, if he could perhaps transfer the lieutenant to an all white regiment. However, at this time, a number of other officers of the regiment voiced their agreement with their fellow officer, and to transfer all of them would be seen as unseemly and as favor to Young.

A simpler solution was found. As he was to be re-activated, it was necessary to take a physical exam to determine if he was fit to serve. As noted before, a blood pressure problem was "discovered", and Young was retained on the retired list, though raised to full Colonel. It was this maneuver which prompted the 16 day ride from his home town to the capitol.

In January of 1922 he was on an inspection tour in Nigeria when he was hospitalized with acute Nephritis, and died within days on January 8. He was buried by the British Military in a cemetery in Lagos, with full honors, and it wasn't until a year later, at the request of his widow, that his body was returned to the U.S. He was eulogized at a ceremony held in New York, by Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt who said, "*...no man ever more truly deserved the high repute in which he was held, for by sheer force of character, he overcame prejudices which would have discouraged many a lesser man.*" His remains were finally interred, again with full honors, at Arlington National Cemetery in the nation's capitol.

There is one more interesting fact about Charles Young's graduation from West Point. As the final term was coming to a close, in June of 1889, Young was declared to be deficient in Engineering, and threatened with the possibility of being left back to repeat a year, something he had already experienced. The members of the faculty, however, had become so impressed with Young's perseverance and determination to become an officer, that he was allowed to remain at the Academy during the summer and be tutored. His tutor turned out to be Lt. Goethals\*, the same officer that had failed him in the subject. The same officer on whose porch, Cadet Alexander Ross Piper had once lingered, and lost his stripes. Goethals gave up 2 months of his personal time to work with Young, and enable him to graduate and receive a commission as a Second Lieutenant, although it was two months after the rest of the class.

\* The name Goethals may sound familiar. A member of the class of 1880, he taught Civil and Military Engineering at West Point 1885 - 1889. Later in his career he was supervising officer for the completion and opening of the Panama Canal. He then became the Governor of the Canal Zone. and retired as a Major General.

During the years after graduation Young kept in touch with many of the members of the class that had befriended him, often expressing his gratitude for their kindness. Although admitting that it had been a painful experience, he always managed to find positive memories of the five years. He ended a letter dated Feb 17, 1919, to Alexander Ross Piper:

*“...While West Point was pretty hard pulling for me, still the roughness was relieved by the sympathy of many of my classmates, to whom I shall ever be grateful and among I shall remember you.”*

However, perhaps his true feelings and the resentment he felt after his inability to be given an active war time command might be exposed in a letter he wrote in response to a request from a young African American asking whether he should try for admittance:

*My dear Mr. Smith:*

*I have your letter of the 26th in which you ask my advice as to your future course in going to a Military Academy. My advice is, don't think of it. If you put one-half of the time, patience, diligence and “pep” in any other profession or vocation, you will succeed and get rich, but if you go thru the Military Academy it means a dog's life while you are there and for years after you graduate, a pittance of a salary as a subaltern and in the end retirement on a mere competence, which does not pay if you have a little girl in view that wishes to wear diamonds.*

*I tell you this as a brother who has been over the whole road. I wish I had taken my time and put it in tropical agriculture and supplement it with the Spanish language and I would have been a rich man now instead of a Colonel on the scrap heap of the U.S.Army.*

*Very sincerely yours,  
Chas. Young  
Colonel, U. S. Army*

notes: Most of the information about Charles Young was obtained from:  
“Black Cadet in a White Bastion - Charles Young at West Point” by Brian G. Shellum, 2006.

Racial discrimination in the U.S.Military Services was ended by Executive Order No. 9981, issued July 26, 1948, by President Harry S. Truman.

### 3. SOME OF THE OTHERS

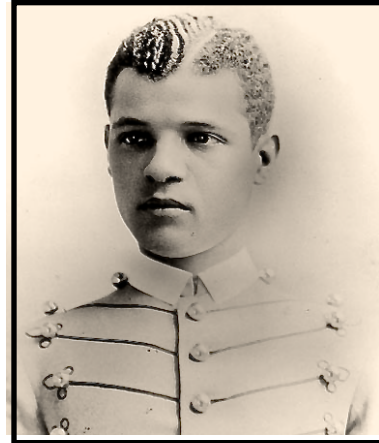
When Charles Young entered West Point in 1884, he was not the only African American cadet in the ranks. John Hanks Alexander was a member of the class of 1887, one year ahead of Young. It must be recognized that there is a sharp differentiation between classes at the Academy, and Young had little chance to associate with the older cadet. The fact that Young was held over and dropped a class at the end of his first year, further separated the two.

Alexander was born in Arkansas in 1864. His father was a barber, a well respected citizen and he saw to it that all of his children were educated. Three of them, including John, attended Oberlin College in Ohio, John for only a year until he passed the entrance exam for West Point.

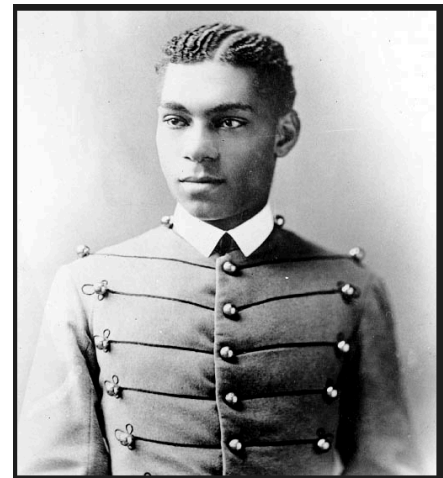
As I have stated before, he was respected and treated honorably by his fellow cadets, he received a long well deserved roar of approval at his graduation in 1887. He was ranked 32nd out of 64 in the class.

Commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant he was sent to the Western front to join the 9th Cavalry of the so called Buffalo Soldiers stationed in Ft. Robinson, Nebraska, in their campaign against the Native American tribes. In 1894, he was transferred to teach Military Science and Tactics at Wilberforce University, but tragically, shortly after his arrival he suffered a ruptured aorta, and died in March of 1894. This ended what could possibly have been an outstanding military career, as he was well respected by all who had served with and under him. He is buried in Xenia, Ohio.

Alexander was the second African American to graduate from West Point, The first was Henry Ossian Flipper, class of 1877. Flipper was born into slavery in Thomasville, Georgia in 1856. His mother was white, and his father, Festus, freed after the Civil War, had a small business in Atlanta, which enabled his son to attend school in that city. He was nominated to the Academy by James Freeman, a congressman from Georgia. In 1873, Flipper had written to Freeman requesting his assistance. Freeman had responded that he would offer his backing if Flipper was "worthy and qualified". After a period in which letters were exchanged, the congressman made his formal recommendation, and Flipper was admitted to the class of 1877. He was 17 years old at the time.



*Cadet John H. Alexander*



*Cadet Henry Ossian Flipper*



While he was at West Point, he was given the so called silent treatment by his fellow cadets, and subjected to the normal hazing. However he managed to control any negative actions he might have committed, and managed to maintain a decent standing in his academic ranking. He graduated number 50 in a class of 76, and was immediately assigned to the 10th Cavalry on the western front. Just a note, his instructor in Artillery Tactics was Major Alexander Piper. His best and favorite subject seemed to be Engineering, which was to bring him a degree of notoriety later at Ft.Sill, Oklahoma.

During the time he was stationed at Ft.Sill, a period of heavy rainfall had caused a number of stagnant pools to collect which drew mosquitos, and resulted in a number of cases of malaria breaking out. A white officer who had studied Engineering at the prestigious Heidelberg University in Germany was called upon to correct the problem. His system failed, and Lieutenant Flipper volunteered to see what he could design. His system of drainage was so successful, that it became known as "Flipper's Ditch" and was added to the Engineering curriculum at the Academy.

Flipper was also noted for the design of a road from Ft. Sill to Gainesville, Texas, and the building of a special telegraph line connecting several military installations in Indian Territory. He continued to serve with distinction, and finally was assigned to Ft. Davis, Texas, where the army was waging a campaign against the Apaches. At Ft. Davis his assignment was Acting Quartermaster and Commissary of Subsistence. When a new Commanding officer arrived at the post, he relieved Flipper of his duties, intending to appoint a permanent Quartermaster.

In preparing to turn over the operation, Flipper discovered a shortage in the Commissary Officer's funds which he kept in his trunk. Flipper tried to conceal the missing funds, hoping that they could be located, but in doing so, he had to lie to his commanding officer, Col. William R. Shafter. Flipper was charged with embezzlement and ordered to stand trial at court martial. The court martial acquitted him of embezzlement, but convicted him of conduct unbecoming an officer, and ordered his dismissal from the service.

As a civilian, Flipper gained notoriety as a surveyor for the U.S.Dept. of Justice in the Court of Private Land Claims, and with a mining company in Mexico, however, he continued to attempt to clear his name. From 1898 to 1924, he tried unsuccessfully to have a bill passed by Congress to restore his rank and status, finally giving up. He died in 1940 at the age of 84.

In 1976 the Army re-opened and reviewed the case, and posthumously awarded him an honorable discharge which was dated June 30, 1892. It was acknowledged that reports had been falsified, but it was ruled that the sentence was too severe. Although he never married, and had no family, supporters continued to lobby the U.S. Congress, and anybody who would listen, to try and earn some degree of vindication. In 1999, President Clinton ordered a posthumous pardon.

During Flipper's third term at the Academy, he had an African American roommate named Johnson Chestnut Whittaker, admitted in 1876 whose class was scheduled to graduate in 1880. Whittaker was born in Camden, South Carolina in 1859, to a slave mother but a free father. Due to his father's independence he was able to attend a freedman school to receive his basic education. As a successful student he was selected

to fill the vacancy caused by the expulsion of another African American cadet. He was treated as badly as other black cadets, receiving the silent treatment, not being spoken to except for orders or to hear a whispered curse. His first year roommate Flipper had advised him to keep his temper in check, and try to ignore the insults and and harassment. Apparently the advice was well taken, as Whittaker was ranked No.1 in his class in Discipline, with no Demerits in the year end official register.

*note, George W. Goethals, who was to appear in the careers of Charles Young and Alexander Ross Piper, was a member of this class.*

It was the 1870's, and not that long since the end of the Civil War. A substantial number of cadets were admitted every year from southern states, and racial tensions were still high. Whittaker seemed to have been able to deflect the slurs, and concentrate on his studies, as his class ranking in Discipline remained high the next year.



*Cadet Johnson Chestnut Whittaker*

However, on April 8, 1880, when Whittaker was not present for a formation, an officer ordered a guard to go to his room, where he was now the sole occupant, Cadet Flipper having graduated. He was discovered unconscious, with numerous cuts to his hands and face, his hands were tied as were his feet which were then tied to the foot of the bed, and pages of his bible torn and tossed around the room. When he was revived, he claimed that three masked cadets had entered his room, tried to get him to resign from West Point, and when he refused, attacked him. He was unable, to identify his attackers.

After regaining his composure, he told the story as follows:\*

*"Last night, immediately after tattoo, I retired, and had been to sleep some time, when I was awakened, I think, shortly after 2 A.M. by the moving of the latch on the door of my room. The door is never locked. At first I thought the noise might have been occasioned by the wind against the hall window. I listened for a moment, and then fell into a doze, when I was again suddenly awakened by some one jumping right on me. I looked sharp, and there were three men in all. Two of them were attired in dark clothing, and the third had on a light grey suit and all wore black masks. I drew back my arm to strike the man who had jumped on me, and I partially raised in the bed in the struggle, when I was seized by the throat and choked till I was almost suffocated, and I was also struck a heavy blow on the left temple, and also on the nose with something hard, the man who dealt the blow shouting at me, 'If you don't be still, you will be a dead man; don't you holler.' I was completely overpowered. One of the men then said, 'Let's mark him like they do hogs down South.' And then, with what I think was a knife, they cut off the lower end of my left ear, and slit the lobe of my right ear once or twice. Next they commenced to tie my feet, and I kicked as hard as I could, when one exclaimed, 'Don't you kick, or I will cut you.' and he did stick my feet twice. At this time the small man, dressed in grey, said to one of the others, 'Look out don't hurt him; see how he bleeds; take my handkerchief and put it around his wounds.' And the handkerchief was taken and applied as suggested but afterward taken away. Then they tied my feet and hands with strips of cross belts, and laid me on the floor with my feet toward the bed in the little alcove*

\* N. Y. Times, April 7, 1880

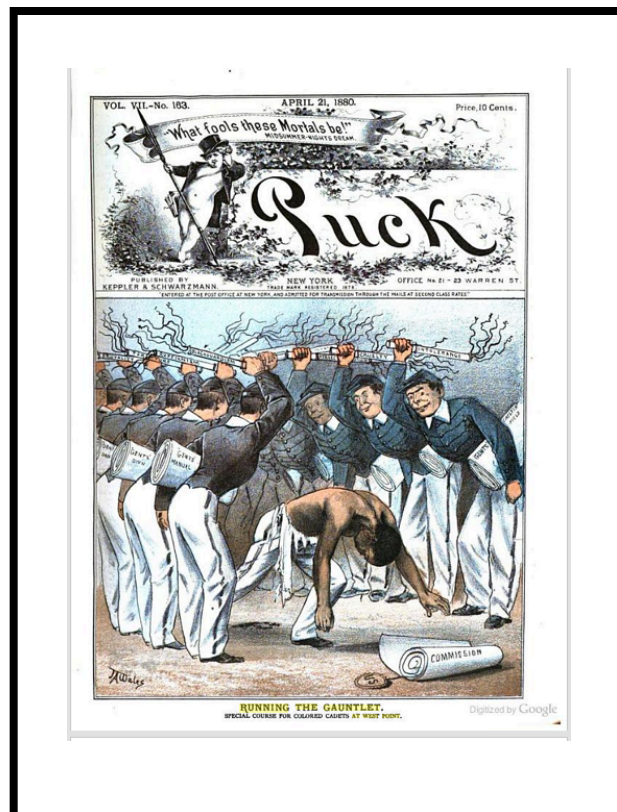
*you see there, and my head toward the wall. Next they tied my feet to the iron bedstead. I asked them if they wouldn't place a pillow under my head, and they did. Again they told me not to holler, and one said, 'Now let's leave.' and they passed quietly out of the room."*

General John M. Schofield, commandant of the Academy, ordered an immediate investigation. When he was asked about Cadet Whittaker, the General described him as a modest and unassuming young man, and though in every way a fine cadet, he was a bit behind in his subjects, and it was contemplated that he might have to be dismissed. However, the General recommended that he be set back one year and given another chance.

After reviewing the report of the incident, Gen. Schofield announced that it seemed apparent that Whittaker had fabricated the story, injured himself, and then tied himself to the bed. He stated that it was unreasonable to assume that negroes could compete successfully with whites, and wrong to make them try. He also suggested that West Point no longer admit members of that race.

Whittaker was outraged at this conclusion, and demanded a court of inquiry which request was granted. This was not a court martial, but technically a hearing to determine the true facts of the case. This inquiry upheld General Schofield's conclusion, but added the specific finding that there was extensive prejudice against Whittaker at West Point because of his race. The verdict caused President Rutherford B. Hayes to remove Schofield and replace him with General Oliver O. Howard, who had been the head of the Federal Freedmen's Bureau, established in 1865 to assist former slaves in assimilating into society after the Civil War. Howard reviewed the incident, and ordered a full court martial to decide what actually took place. Whittaker was given official leave of absence to prepare his defense.

The case drew national attention. The cover of Puck, shown below, published April 21, 1880, depicts "Running the Gauntlet", and expresses sympathy with Whittaker's cause.



A former Governor of South Carolina was defense lawyer, while Asa Bird Gardiner was the trial lawyer for the Army. Gardiner later became a high officer in Tammany Hall, and an assistant District Attorney for N.Y. He was quoted at the trial as stating that Negroes were notorious for their ability to "sham" and "feign", and often referred to the "inferior" and "superior" races.

Whittaker was found guilty. Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of the late President, who was Secretary of War declared that the trial was invalid, and the verdict was overturned. President Chester A. Arthur upheld this decision. But in order to maintain the prestige of the Academy, and prevent any further acts against Whittaker, Lincoln declared that since Whittaker had earlier failed an exam, he was dismissed from the Academy.



Whittaker decided not to contest this, and he returned to South Carolina, where he took up teaching at the Avery Institute, a school for African Americans started in 1865 in Charleston. He also studied law, and was admitted to the bar in South Carolina in 1885, but finding it was difficult for a black attorney to get many clients, he returned to teaching full time, becoming the principal of a new black public school in Sumter. By then he had married, and started a family. He continued teaching, as a principal in another newly formed black school in Oklahoma City, and later a professor of Psychology in South Carolina.

He died in 1931 and is buried in a black only cemetery in Orangeburg, the date being almost the fiftieth anniversary of his court martial. Two of his sons served as Army officers in World War I, and one became the third President of South Carolina State University. A grandson flew with the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II, and a granddaughter was a founder of the Detroit Tribune. In 1995, Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, introduced legislation clearing Whittaker's name, and in that year President Clinton presented a posthumous commission of 2nd Lieutenant to Whittaker's descendants, stating, *"We cannot undo history. But today we can honor a great American and we can acknowledge a great injustice."*



*The above photo recently for sale on e-bay for \$5.75 is captioned:  
Notable People : Johnson C. Whittaker, who was unjustly  
expelled from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1881*

Who then was the first African American to enter West Point? In 1870, Benjamin F. Butler, a former Civil War General for the Union, and subsequently elected a Representative from Massachusetts, nominated a Salem youth named Charles Sumner Wilson. Wilson, who had been outstanding in his school studies, was denied admission however, as he was only 16 at the time. He continued his education in Massachusetts, and Census entries in 1880 show him to be a lawyer. By 1900, he was listed as a resident of the Danvers State Hospital, and he was buried in their cemetery in 1904.

During the 19th century a total of 27 African Americans were nominated. Of that number only 12 were accepted for appointment: J. Alexander, W.T.Andrews, H.O.Flipper, T.V.Gibbs, W.A.Hare, H.W.Holloway, C.A.Minnie, H.A.Napier, J.W.Smith, J.C.Whittaker, J.W.Williams, and C.Young. And of that group, only three managed to graduate; Alexander, Flipper and Young. I have already written about those three.....as to the others, William Trent Andrews, from South Carolina, admitted in 1885, discharged in Jan of 1886 after failing an exam. He went on to graduate from Howard University in 1892 and became an attorney with a successful real estate practice as well in Sumter, S.C. He would have been in the same class as A.R.P.

Thomas Van Rensslear Gibbs of N.Y., admitted 1872, discharged the following January for failure in a course. He became a member of the Florida State Constitutional Convention in 1886, and a member of the State House of Representatives in the 1890's.

William Achilles Hare from Ohio, admitted June 14,1885 and discharged in January 1886. I have found no hard evidence of what he did in later life, except I came across some references to a Achilles Hare who practiced law. He was once mentioned in a cadet's notes: *"with a complexion so light he could pass for a white cadet."*

Henry Wilson Holloway of South Carolina, admitted 1886, discharged in 1887 due to deficiency in Mathematics. His name is carried on the rolls of the National Archives Trust Fund Board's Military Service Records indicating that he did serve at one time in the armed services.

Charles Augustus Minnie from N.Y., was a roommate of Cadet Whittaker in 1877. He too failed Math and was discharged in 1878.

Henry Alonzo Napier of Tennessee was admitted 1871 was actually the second African American to be nominated. Math also proved to be his nemesis along with French and he was discharged in 1872. He went on to become a teacher in the Nashville public school system, and was at one time a delegate to the State Colored Convention of the Republican Party.

John Washington Williams from Virginia, admitted in 1873 was found deficient after the January exams. However, the administration felt he had potential, and Cadet Flipper was ordered to tutor him. This action was not successful and Williams was discharged after being re-examined in June 1874.

That leaves James Webster Smith, who's story deserves a closer scrutiny. Smith was born in 1850 in Columbia, South Carolina. His Mother, Catherine, was an indentured servant to James Sanders Guinard of that city, and his father Israel, a mulatto, was a carpenter.

After the end of the Civil War in 1865, a number of Freedman Bureau schools, for the purpose of educating former slaves, were established. Israel Smith enrolled his son in the local one. James became an ideal student and fast learner, and was recognized by one of his teachers, a Miss Loomis, as exceptional, and she reported this to David Clark, a philanthropist from her home town, Hartford, Connecticut. Clark visited Columbia and was impressed by Smith's progress, and convinced the boy's parents to allow their son to come and live with the Clarks in Hartford, and attend the Hartford Public High School, where in April 1870 he graduated with honors.

Clark, who had been an officer in the Union Army, was a friend of Gen. Oliver O. Howard, who had been appointed Chief Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau by President Andrew Johnson. Among the most noted of the Bureau's actions was the forming of a collegiate institution principally for African American students. Named Howard University in honor of one of its founders, Smith was enrolled there after his high school graduation.

Gen. Howard took a personal interest in fostering Smith's education, and his friend, the Hon. Solomon L. Hoge, who also had been an officer in the Union Army, though born in Ohio, was representing the Third District of South Carolina, Smith's home state, in the U.S. Congress. Howard, who was a graduate of West Point, class of 1854, was eager to have an African American successfully appointed to the Academy. It would be a high mark in his term at the Freedman's Bureau. At Howard's urging, Rep. Hoge nominated James Webster Smith for West Point, May 28, 1870. Smith, immediately left Washington, D.C., and hastened to the Academy, so that he could be tested in the June 1870 examinations.

Upon his arrival at Highland Falls, where the Academy was located, he checked in at a local hotel, and having travelled all night and being hungry, he asked the desk clerk where he could get something to eat. Smith got his first taste of what his life would be like for the next several years. Referring to him as "*nigger*", the clerk said, "*You'll be hungry a good while if you expect to get something to eat here.*" This was just the beginning.

In the middle of the night, a short time after he had been assigned a room with Michael Howard another African American candidate from Mississippi, someone came into their quarters and emptied the contents of a slop pail over them while they slept. They reported the incident but were told they had to identify who had committed the act before any disciplinary action could be taken. They discovered an envelope in the rubbish with the address of a cadet candidate from Kentucky, who was questioned, but as he denied having anything to do with it, he was not punished, and the incident was ignored.

Several days later, Howard and this same young man had an altercation in which Howard was punched in the face, because, "... *damned nigger didn't get out of the way as I was going into the bootblack's shop.*" He was confined to his room, but punishment became unnecessary, as shortly thereafter, he failed his exam and was dismissed, as was Michael Howard.

Smith passed his entrance exam and was admitted to the Fourth Class, or what would be considered Freshman in today's colleges, on July 9, 1870, the first African American to have been so honored. But he was now alone, and would become the sole subject of the racial slurs and actions of other cadets. He tried to complain to superiors several times, but soon realized that he would never be able to find any witnesses to back him up, so he decided to pay little attention to these acts.

During their first summer at the Academy, the new class was taken to an encampment to give them a taste of typical military field life.....and also to allow West Point to be cleaned up while most of the cadets were away.

The new cadets, called plebes, were the ones required to perform cleaning duties, or policing as it was known. Certain other cadets would deliberately spit out large chews of tobacco, a common habit at the time, and Smith would be called upon to "police the area". He would search out a shovel and broom, but would invariably be ordered to use his fingers, and not try to become a gentleman. Smith wrote to his benefactor, Mr Clark and complained of the treatment he was receiving. Unfortunately, Clark had the letter published, which only caused to make matters worse.

A group was sent from Congress to investigate, and found that there were incidents of conduct unbecoming cadets, and recommended that several be court-martialed. This was denied by The Secretary of War who had control over these matters, who ordered a reprimand as being sufficient. Among those reprimanded were the sons of two Generals, and the nephew of the Secretary of War, as well as Smith for bringing attention to the matter in the press. You can imagine how this affected his popularity, if there was any, at the Academy.

In August, while Smith was on guard duty, he was ordered to get a pail of water from the pump, and to return to his post within 10 minutes. Arriving at the faucet he was held up by another cadet, a classmate named J.W.Wilson, who was standing in front of the tap, drinking slowly from a dipper. Smith asked him to move so he could fill his pail, and get back to his post. The reply was, "*...I'd like to see any damned nigger get water before I am through.*" Smith tried to push his pail under the tap so he could get water and comply with his orders, but Wilson kicked the pail over, and hit Smith with his dipper as he bent over and tried to right it. An altercation ensued with blows being struck, both by fists and dippers, with the result that Wilson was severely injured. Smith was immediately arrested and confined to quarters. Wilson was arrested when he returned to duty from the hospital, several weeks later.

This incident resulted in a court-martial, to which a second charge was added. This came about from an incident in which Smith was reported to have made a disrespectful remark to a superior. He wrote a reply denying the charge, but three other cadets were found who swore that they heard what Smith had said. This resulted in a charge for making a false statement, and was added to the agenda of the trial.

The proceedings took place in September. Smith pleaded not guilty to both charges. He was acquitted on the second, for he was able to prove that there was no drill on the date and time the incident was reported to have happened, and that the Corporal who reported the incident and two of his three witnesses were on guard duty at the time, and



could not have been at the drill even if it had been held as alleged. The accusing cadet was not punished for false accusations, as he stated he had only made a mistake in the date.

The second charge was much more serious, and both Smith and Wilson were found guilty of assault, and assigned to be confined to quarters for two or three weeks, with some extra duty added. Ulysses S. Grant, then the President of the United States, as the Commander in Chief, reviewed the finding of the court, and approved the verdict for Cadet Wilson, but disapproved the one for Smith on the ground that it was not severe enough. However, as he did not have the authority to alter it, the verdict was let stand.

The sentence ended in November, and Smith returned to the ranks, but by December he was in trouble again. While marching in formation, he was stepped on repeatedly by the cadet along side. As he previously had trouble with this cadet, Anderson, he assumed it was done deliberately, and he accused Anderson of doing so. Another cadet in the ranks made some remark, and the Cadet Corporal reported Smith for his inattention in the ranks. Both Anderson and the other cadet denied any charges against them, and instead it was Smith who was charged a second time for making false statements. Tried and found guilty in January 1871, he was ordered to be dismissed, but it was changed to a year's suspension, which essentially meant he was put back a year to the next Fourth Class.

Order of general merit	Names.	State.		Date of Admission.	Age at date of Admission.	Yrs. in Acad.	Order of merit in		Demerit for the year.
		Born in	Appointed from				Mathematics.	French.	
36	Horatio L. Buckley.....	Pa.	Pa.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	7	33	43	93
37	Frederick A. Colby.....	Mass.	Mass.	July 1, 1870	17	3	36	35	137
38	John W. Wilson.....	Iowa.	W. Va.	July 1, 1870	19	5	32	49	37
39	Christian C. Hewett.....	Va.	W. Va.	July 1, 1870	21	4	39	31	12
40	Luther R. Hare.....	Ind.	Texas.	Sept. 1, 1870	19	0	37	39	33
41	Marion P. Maus.....	Md.	Md.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	0	44	21	34
42	William S. Davies.....	N. Y.	Cal.	July 1, 1870	20	0	42	40	68
43	William H. Wheeler.....	Ohio.	Wis.	Sept. 1, 1870	18	3	45	38	56
44	Alfred Reynolds.....	Pa.	N. J.	Sept. 1, 1870	21	5	43	45	21
45	Achilles M. Hancock.....	Tenn.	Tenn.	Sept. 1, 1870	21	6	47	34	17
46	Moses F. Blaisdell.....	Mass.	Mass.	Sept. 1, 1870	17	11	49	29	43
47	Charles F. Lloyd.....	Sweden	Iowa.	Sept. 1, 1870	19	1	46	41	46
48	Milton A. Elliott.....	Ark.	Ark.	Sept. 1, 1870	19	7	48	50	24
49	James W. Smith.....	S. C.	S. C.	July 1, 1870	20	1	30	20	90
50	Olin McC. Boyle.....	N. J.	Pa.	July 1, 1870	18	11	a	48	56
51	James H. Reid.....	Iowa.	Iowa.	July 1, 1870	19	4	a	51	87
52	Andrew C. Walker.....	Va.	Va.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	5	a	52	42
53	Samuel A. Cherry.....	Ind.	Ind.	July 1, 1870	20	2	b	b	12
54	Dan C. Kingman.....	N. H.	N. H.	July 1, 1870	18	4	c	c	69
55	Arthur L. Wagner.....	Ill.	Ill.	July 1, 1870	17	3	c	c	91

§ To join the next succeeding Fourth Class (General Court Martial, Orders No. 8, War Department, June 13, 1871).

a Deficient.  
b Not examined. Absent (sick).  
c Not examined. Suspended.

The record of the class for the year shows that Smith was 30th out of 55 in Mathematics, and 20th in French; far from the worst. And even his 90 Demerits was topped by several others. The note at the bottom shows his being demoted to the next succeeding Fourth Class as per Orders No.8, General Court Martial.

Concerning this last trial, Smith wrote several years later in a letter to a South Carolina Newspaper, " *I had no counsel at this trial, as I knew it would be useless, considering the one sided condition of affairs.*" He was allowed to make a statement to the court which could be placed in the records of the proceedings.

The make up of a general court-martial consists of the presiding officer, at this point in time called the President of the Court, who would rule on procedure, administer oaths, and preserve order; a prosecutor, a defense counsel, and a minimum of three officers, ( although in special cases, the accused may request a 1/3rd enlisted representation.) The Presiding officer did not vote on guilt or innocence.

I learned that the President of this court-martial was Captain Alexander Piper, Third Artillery, who was at that time serving on the faculty of the Academy as Assistant Instructor of Artillery Tactics.



A drawing of James Webster Smith making his statement to the court

On June 11, 1871, Smith joined the entering class of 1875. Henry Alonzo Napier who had been a classmate of Smith's at Howard University was a member of this class and he and Smith became roommates. They both became the subject of racial slurs and discrimination. But by the following year, Smith was alone again as Napier, as previously noted, was dismissed in June the following year for deficiency in Math and French.

Smith, now in his second plebe year was ranked well in a class of 66.....15th in Order of Merit, 17th in Math, and 14th in French. And although continuing to receive mistreatment from both fellow cadets as well as faculty, did well in his third year.....37th out of 56 overall, 38th in Math and 49th in Drawing and maintained good standing in French and Spanish.

Two more African American cadets entered the ranks.....Flipper and Williams.....both noted earlier in these pages.....but Williams left after 6 months. Flipper now roomed with Smith, and Smith advised him to act with restraint against any acts of racism. Flipper had a harder shell than Smith, and was able to endure all the hardships he encountered, and managed to graduate. Smith's downfall came in his 2nd year (actually 4th in time spent), when he encountered a new course the Academy had installed.....Natural and Experimental Philosophy.

Try as he might, he could not manage in this class, and he was declared deficient in the June 1873 exams. In October of that year he transferred to a lower section in this course and in a final exam, given privately by Professor Peter J. Michie in June 1874 he was failed again.

Michie stated that Cadet Smith had “...a marked deficiency in deductive reasoning.” At this point the Academy Academic Board dismissed him from the corps.

Smith went to Washington to meet personally with Secretary of War William W. Belknap and pleaded for another chance, or at least to be left back another year and given the opportunity to complete the course, graduate and be commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. He showed Belknap records from the register of 1871 that showed 3 Fourth Year cadets had failed a course that year, and even though two were released, one was held back.....and that one was James H. Reid, a nephew of Belknap.

FOURTH CLASS—55 MEMBERS—1871.										
Order of general merit	Names.	State.		Date of Admission.	Years.	Age at date of Admission.	Order of merit in		Demerit for the year.	
		Born in	Appointed from				Mathematics.	French.		
36	Horatio L. Buckley	Pa.	Pa.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	7	33	43	93	
37	Frederick A. Colby	Mass.	Mass.	July 1, 1870	17	3	36	35	137	
38	John W. Wilson	Iowa.	W. Va.	July 1, 1870	19	5	32	49	37	
39	Christian C. Hewett	Iowa.	Va.	July 1, 1870	21	4	39	31	12	
40	Luther R. Hare	Ind.	Texas.	Sept. 1, 1870	19	0	37	39	33	
41	Marion P. Maus	Md.	Md.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	0	44	21	34	
42	William S. Davies	N. Y.	Cal.	July 1, 1870	20	0	42	40	68	
43	William H. Wheeler	Ohio.	Wis.	Sept. 1, 1870	18	3	45	38	56	
44	Alfred Reynolds	Pa.	N. J.	Sept. 1, 1870	21	5	43	45	21	
45	Achilles M. Hancock	Tenn.	Tenn.	Sept. 1, 1870	21	6	47	34	17	
46	Moses F. Blaisdell	Mass.	Mass.	Sept. 1, 1870	17	11	49	29	43	
47	Charles F. Lloyd	Iowa.	Sweden	Sept. 1, 1870	19	1	46	41	46	
48	Milton A. Elliott	Ark.	Ark.	Sept. 1, 1870	19	7	48	50	24	
49	James W. Smith	S. C.	S. C.	July 1, 1870	20	1	30	20	90	
50	Olin McC. Boyle	N. J.	Pa.	July 1, 1870	18	11	a	48	56	
51	James H. Reid	Iowa.	Iowa.	July 1, 1870	19	4	a	31	87	
52	Andrew C. Walker	Va.	Va.	Sept. 1, 1870	20	5	a	32	42	
53	Samuel A. Cherry	Ind.	Ind.	July 1, 1870	20	2	b	6	12	
54	Dan C. Kingman	N. H.	N. H.	July 1, 1870	18	4	c	e	69	
55	Arthur L. Wagner	Ill.	Ill.	July 1, 1870	17	3	c	e	91	

§ To join the next succeeding Fourth Class (General Court Martial, Orders No. 8, War Department, June 13, 1871).  
a Deficient.  
b Not mentioned. Absent (false).

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1872

#### FOURTH CLASS—66 MEMBERS.

Order of general merit	Names.	Born in	State.	Appointed from.	Date of Admission.	Years.	Age at date of Admission.	Order of merit in		Demerit for the year.
								Mathematics.	French.	
23	Backus, George B. jr.	Pa.	Ind.	Cal.	Sept. 1, 1871	20	9	19	41	55
24	Weaver, Erasmus M. jr.	Ind.	Col.	N. Y.	"	"	17	4	20	39
25	Dykman, William N.	N. Y.	N. Y.	"	"	"	17	4	29	16
26	McCaleb, Thomas S.	Va.	Iowa.	Va.	July 1, "	"	17	7	28	20
27	Huntington, Henry D.	Vt.	Iowa.	Sept. 1, "	"	21	1	26	34	
28	Reid, James H.	Iowa.	Iowa.	(a) July 1, "	70	19	4	25	97	
29	Wagner, Arthur L.	Ill.	Ill.	(b) "	"	17	3	32	18	
30	Howe, Myron W.	Mass.	Mass.	(c) "	"	18	8	30	26	
31	Smith, George R.	N. Y.	N. Y.	(d) "	"	20	2	33	23	
32	Sturgis, James G.	N. Mex.	Atharge	"	1871	17	6	27	46	
33	Rodgers, Alexander	N. J.	Atharge	"	"	18	6	42	1	
34	Baldwin, John M.	La.	La.	"	"	17	1	39	12	
35	Eltonhead, Francis E.	Pa.	Pa.	"	"	17	8	34	29	
36	Flickinger, Enosh H.	Ohio.	Ohio.	(e) "	1870	17	0	31	45	
37	Ballance, John G.	Ill.	Ill.	"	1871	18	1	36	35	
38	Hall, Johnson C.	Cal.	La.	"	"	17	2	35	43	
39	Mason, Stanton A.	N. Y.	N. Y.	"	"	18	9	37	37	
40	Bolton, Edwin B.	Miss.	Miss.	"	"	21	5	40	42	
41	Lebell, Harvey W.	Ky.	Ky.	"	"	21	1	43	38	
42	Cummings, Joseph F.	Texas.	Texas.	"	"	20	0	45	32	
43	Touey, Timothy A.	N. Y.	N. Y.	Sept. 1, "	"	20	3	46	31	
44	Scott, George L.	Oregon	Oregon	July 1, "	"	21	7	38	64	
45	Goe, James B.	Ohio.	Ohio.	"	"	18	3	50	25	

(a) Joined Fourth Class July 1, 1871, Orders No. 13, War Dept., Wash., July 17, 1871.  
(b) Suspended from Dec. 6, 1870, till July 1, 1871—G. C. M. O. No. 36, A. G. O. Dec. 6, 1870—then joined Fourth Class.  
(c) Dismissed Dec. 10, 1870, Orders No. 30, War Dept., Wash., Dec. 6, 1870—Restored July 1, 1871—Orders No. 9, War Dept., Wash., May 17, 1871—then joined Fourth Class.  
(d) Dismissed Dec. 13, 1870, Orders No. 30, War Dept., Wash., Dec. 6, 1870—Restored July 1, 1871—Orders No. 9, War Dept., Wash., May 17, 1871—then joined Fourth Class.  
(e) Resigned Jan. 10, 1871, Orders No. 1, War Dept., Wash., Jan. 9, 1871—Restored July 1, 1871—Orders No. 12, War Dept., Wash., June 16, 1871—then joined Fourth Class.

1872

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#### CASUALTIES.

Resigned (3).			
Resinger, Charles A.	4th Class.	December 10, 1871.	
Strider, Robert S.	4th Class.	December 31, 1871.	
Yomans, Francis C.	4th Class.	August 30, 1871.	
Discharged (38).			
Pirch, Christopher C.	1st Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Dixon, John C.	3d Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Lasater, William	3d Class.	July 19, 1871.	
McDonald, Frank R.	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
North, Frederick A.	3d Class.	July 19, 1871.	
Reagan, Taylor	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Bucker, John A.	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Thompson, George S.	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Blaisdell, Moses F.	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Buckley, Horatio L.	3d Class.	December 15, 1871.	
Colby, Frederick A.	3d Class.	December 15, 1871.	
Dillon, Charles L.	3d Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Elliott, Milton A.	3d Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Hancock, Achilles M.	3d Class.	January 25, 1872.	
Boyle, Olin McC.	4th Class.	July 19, 1871.	
Brockbridge, Stephen L.	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Cox, George A.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Devine, John L.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Ellis, Harvey C. H.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Hayman, Albert H.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Reinick, William	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Houston, Andrew J.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Lee, Walter	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Lysan, Chauncey W.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Mahon, Alphonse H.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Martin, Francis J.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Maryland, William	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Montague, Dwight P.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Murphy, Paul H. C.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Napier, Henry A.	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Noff, James H.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Newton, Virginia M.	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Risley, Charles W.	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Shively, Joseph F.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Thompson, Charles W.	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Van Horn, Robert C.	4th Class.	June 30, 1872.	
Walker, Andrew C.	4th Class.	July 19, 1871.	
Wilson, Wesley	4th Class.	January 15, 1872.	
Dismissed (5).			
Wilson, John W.	3d Class.	October 30, 1871.	
Brewer, Edwin F.	4th Class.	November 14, 1871.	
Fraser, DeWitt C.	4th Class.	October 20, 1871.	
Hobell, Santiago F.	4th Class.	October 20, 1871.	
Sillen, John L.	4th Class.	October 20, 1871.	

Three pages of official registers, the first showing the three deficient...Olin McC. Boyle, 1. Reid, Andrew C. Walker. The second or discharged in 1871, and the third, that Reid was a member of the class again in 1872.



Belknap was not persuaded, and merely stated that Smith had been given his second chance after the court martial in January 1871. Smith left the Academy in July, 1874 and returned to Orangeburg, South Carolina.

The Civil War was over.....emancipation had been declared.....A Federal Bureau of Freedmen had been established to aid former slaves to enter society as free and equal citizens.....and yet the anger still existed. Remember that slavery was not limited to the South. Many landowners and aristocrats of the North had maintained a household and estate with slaves. The seaports of the North contained many vessels that had brought them to America. And the Military was made up of Officers and men who had served on both sides.

In July of 1870, President Grant had been in Hartford, Connecticut, and David Clark, Smith's benefactor, was able to secure a meeting in which he wanted to discuss his protégé's initial negative reception at the Academy. The President assured Clark that he would do everything in his power to enable Smith to graduate. The President's son, Fred who was a member of that year's senior class at the Academy was present at this meeting and he has been quoted as saying, "*...the time has not come to send colored boys to West Point,*" Clark disagreed and Fred replied, "*... that no damned nigger will ever graduate from West Point.*"

In January, 1871, Cadet Grant and three others took three Plebes, including Smith, and abandoned them some miles away from the Academy grounds with nothing but light summer clothing on. This was normal hazing of Plebes, and was also practiced by many fraternities at universities across the country. However, even though the offending cadets were identified, the academy authorities took no action against them. Congress, which investigated the affair, instructed the Secretary of War to dismiss those implicated. The Cabinet member let the matter drop as one of the offenders was the son of the President.

A letter from a cadet to his brother stated, "*The nigger was sentenced by the recent court martial to walk six extra tours of Guard Duty for his lying, knocking down, while white men are sent away. But the Attorney General has made some remarks on the court martial. I do not know what he will do. The President has disapproved the sentence so he gets no punishment at all unless the nigger is court martialed again for the same offense.*"

Smith had lost his opportunity, if he never really had one. There were too many opposing forces at work at the time to let him achieve his goal. However, his ordeal opened many minds and eyes, and allowed Henry Ossian Flipper to graduate in 1877, and others to follow, although it took time.

In 1875, James Webster Smith, took a position teaching mathematics and military tactics to a corps of cadets at the State Agricultural College & Mechanics Institute, a school founded by the Freedman's Bureau for African American students. Located at the time on the grounds of Claflin University, in Orangeburg, S.C., it eventually became, and is still, South Carolina State University.

It was here that he met and married his wife, Elizabeth, who taught music. He was only able to teach a short time, as on November 30, 1876, he died of tuberculosis, and was buried in Columbia, South Carolina. My resources do not disclose a grave location, and even though he was survived by his wife and an infant child, a search for descendants has not been successful.

When Johnson Chester Whittaker received his commission posthumously in 1995, a group of individuals from South Carolina, led by the Congressman from the 5th District, James Spratt, began to lobby for Smith to be similarly honored. President Clinton issued an executive order to comply with their wishes, and in 1997, 120 years after James Webster Smith had passed away, the insignia of a 2nd Lieutenant, and the commission was presented to officials of South Carolina State University, in Orangeburg, by Spratt, Representative Jim Clyburn and Secretary of the Army, Togo D. West, Jr.. The University was chosen as a recipient, as an exhaustive search at the time for living relatives could find none to receive this honor. They are on display in the ROTC Hall of Fame.

In 1874, Smith wrote a series of letters to the New National Era, a newspaper expressly for African Americans in Washington, D.C., edited at the time by Frederick Douglass. I am not sure if he expected these letters to bring vindication, more likely, to get his side of the various incidents made public. The last of these contained the following:

*“ ‘Upon my honor as a cadet and a gentleman,’ is a favorite expression with the West Point Cadet; but what kind of honor is that by which a young man can quiet his conscience while telling a base falsehood for the purpose of shielding a fellow student from punishment for a disgraceful act? They boast of the esprit de corps existing among cadets; but it is merely a cloak for the purpose of covering up their iniquities and silencing those, (for there are some) who would, if allowed to act according to the dictates of their own consciences, be above such disgraceful acts. Some persons might attribute to me the same motives that actuated the fox in crying sour grapes, and to such I will say that I never asked for social equality at West Point. I never visited the quarters of any professor, official, or cadet except on duty, for i did not wish any one to think that I was in any way desirous of social recognition by those who felt themselves superior to me on account of color. As I was never recognized as a cadet and a gentleman, I could not enjoy that blessed privilege of swearing upon my honor, boasting of my share in the esprit de corps, nor of concealing my sins by taking advantage of them. Still I hope that what I lost by being deprived of these little benefits will be compensated for (by) the still small voice, which tells me that I have done my best.*

*Yours respectfully,*

*J.W.Smith, Late Cadet, U.S.M.A. “*

Permit me to speculate. It would be only 11 years later, 1885, that young Alexander Ross Piper became a cadet at West Point. Could there have been words of advice from his uncle, and mentor, Col. Alexander Piper who had been the presiding officer at one of the courts martial that convicted James Smith. I would like to believe that newly appointed cadet Piper became a fellow classmate and friend of cadet Charles Young, with a true recognition of the words of the Declaration of Independence " ...all men are created equal." and a recognition that perhaps James Webster Smith had not been given a fair chance.

Cadet Smith's trials and tribulations, as well as of those who followed and were also unsuccessful, opened many minds and eyes to the difficulties that would be encountered in accepting members of minority races into the military and, I believe it was the compassion and understanding of men like Alexander Ross Piper and his classmates of 1889 who helped to reach that point in which all are accepted with respect, and ultimately, equality and friendship.

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Notes: The following were my primary sources for the material contained above:

Flipper, Henry O. The Colored Cadet at West Point. New York: Homer Lee & Co., 1878

Shellum, Brian G. Black Cadet in a White Bastion Charles Young at West Point. Univ. of Nebraska 2006

Shellum, Brian G. Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment The Military Career of Charles Young. Univ. of Nebraska 2010

Oliver, Capt. Matt, Society's Sacrifice: The First Black Cadet at West Point. James Webster Smith U.S.M.A. 1993

Registers of the Officers and Cadets and Reports of the Board of Visitors ( 1800--1899 )

I also wish to thank Avery Daniels, Archivist at the South Carolina State University for his assistance.

David.J.Livingston April, 2013

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I sent a draft of the above to Alton P. Donnell, Jr. West Point 1967, great grand son of Alexander Ross Piper, son of Alton P. Donnell, West Point class of 1940, and father of Tyler R. Donnell, West Point class of 2002. With all that background I felt he could surely vet my document, and call to my attention any grievous errors. I hereby submit some of his notes and comments.

William Kirkpatrick Piper ran a stationary store in Carlisle, Pa. where Alexander Ross Piper was able to work when he was not attending school in Carlisle. The schools in the more established Carlisle were likely better than those around West Point at the time.

Alexander (uncle) knew that his (faculty) time at West Point would be limited and that he would be expected to move on to a next assignment. In August of '81 he took command of Ft. Trumbull, Connecticut, then on to Florida, California, eventually returning to N.Y. in 1887.

As chief of Artillery tactics at West Point, Alexander Piper was likely to be superior in the Tactics Department, and highly involved in the good order and discipline of the cadets. Because of that, he was probably quartered on the post not at the Cozzens Hotel. But surely they spent lots of time there.

It should be mentioned that Alexander Ross Piper received the Silver Star Citation for gallantry in action August 8, 1898, at Guayama, Puerto Rico, when he retired from active duty, July 11, 1899. He went on to an active civilian life, and was activated again to the Army during World War I where he achieved the rank of Colonel.

And finally, I should make a comment about the use of the term "Casualties" in describing cadets who were let go from the Academy. This was a term used in the Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, and includes "Resigned," "Discharged," and sometimes "Died." It does not refer to cadets injured or lost in the line of active military duty.

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